

COMDTINST 5375.1

22 DEC 2000

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5375.1

Subj: LIMITED PERSONAL USE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Ref: (a) Standards of Conduct, COMDTINST M5370.8A

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction establishes policy on personal use of government office equipment by Coast Guard personnel.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, assistant commandants for directorates, Chief Counsel, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure that the provisions of this Instruction are followed.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Authorized Use of Government Telephone Systems, COMDTINST 2060.3; Federal Telecommunications System 2000, COMDTINST 2060.4; Operation Hang-up, COMDTINST 2060.5 are hereby cancelled. Coast Guard Telecommunications Manual, COMDTINST M2000.3; Management of Electronic Mail, COMDTINST 5270.1D; Policy on Coast Guard Use of the Internet/Worldwide Web, COMDTINST 5230.56 will be revised, removing the prohibitions for personal use from each.
4. DISCUSSION.
 - a. As we transition to e-government and our vision of e-Coast Guard, we must aggressively embrace the use of Information Technology (IT) to conduct our business functions in the most efficient and effective means possible. Personal travel claims, pay and allowances adjustments, and assignment decisions, as well as routine procurements and many enterprise-wide applications and processes will soon be generated and executed via the World Wide Web. It is vital for Coast Guard personnel to increase their IT competency by thoroughly familiarizing themselves with the tools available, and developing and leveraging the skills required to operate in an Internet economy. Relaxing the prohibitions for personal use of government office equipment will facilitate the development of IT competency throughout the workforce, and will

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make us better informed contributors to the missions and effectiveness of the Coast Guard through collaboration and innovation. It will also enhance the quality of the workplace.

- b. Increased personal use, however, must be accompanied with common-sense guidance to ensure the impact of personal use does not consume excess resources or interfere with the bandwidth and IT infrastructure required to conduct the Coast Guard's business. The bandwidth required to support Coast Guard missions is limited and very expensive. Excessive personal use of the Coast Guard Standard Workstation (CGSW), its peripheral equipment, electronic mail (e-mail), and the Internet have the potential to significantly degrade the operational mission performance of the Coast Guard. All personnel have a requirement to monitor their use of the CGSW, associated equipment and applications to ensure responsible use of network bandwidth and financial resources.
- c. This policy establishes new privileges and delineates corresponding responsibilities for Coast Guard personnel for limited personal use of government office equipment.

5. AUTHORITY.

- a. Generally, Coast Guard personnel may use government office equipment for authorized purposes only. As set forth below, certain limited personal use of government office equipment by personnel is considered to be an "authorized use" of Government property.
- b. The Secretary of Transportation's authority under 5 U.S.C. section 301 has been delegated to the Commandant under 49 C.F.R. section 1.45(2), which provides that he may exercise the authority of the Secretary as executive head of a department, under any statute, Executive order or regulation.

6. POLICY. Coast Guard personnel are permitted limited use of government office equipment for personal needs if the use does not interfere with official business and involves minimal additional expense to the Government. The privilege to use government office equipment for non-government purposes may be revoked or limited at any time by Commanding Officers or supervisory personnel. Commanding Officers may restrict the personal use of government equipment to non-business hours. Commanding Officers may apply this policy to contractor personnel, interns, and other non-government employees through incorporation by reference in contracts or memorandums of agreement as conditions for using Government office equipment and space.

- a. Definitions: Definitions are contained in Enclosure (1) to this Instruction.
- b. Specific Provisions on Use of Equipment and Services. Limited personal use of government office equipment must incur only minimal additional expense to the Government in areas such as:
 - (1) Communications infrastructure costs; e.g., telephone charges, telecommunications traffic, e-mail, network bandwidth, etc.;
 - (2) Use of consumables in limited amounts ; e.g., paper, ink, toner, etc.;
 - (3) General wear and tear on equipment;

(4) Data storage on storage devices.

- c. Proper Representation. It is the responsibility of Coast Guard personnel to ensure that they are not giving the false impression that they are acting in an official capacity when they are using government office equipment for non-government purposes. If there is expectation that such personal use could be interpreted to represent the Coast Guard or Department of Transportation, then an adequate disclaimer must be used. One acceptable disclaimer is -"The contents of this message are mine personally and do not reflect any position of the Government, Department of Transportation, or Coast Guard." Reference (a) states - "...an employee shall not use or permit the use of his Government position or title or any authority associated with his public office in a manner that could reasonably be construed to imply that his agency or the Government sanctions or endorses his personal activities..."
 - d. Privacy Expectations. Coast Guard personnel do not have a right, nor should they have an expectation, of privacy while using any government office equipment at any time, including use of the Coast Guard Standard Workstation, accessing the Internet, or using E-mail, telephones, facsimile machines and copiers. To the extent that personnel wish that their private activities remain private, they should avoid using government office equipment. By using government office equipment, Coast Guard personnel imply their consent to monitoring, recording and disclosing the contents of any files or information maintained or passed through Government office equipment, with or without cause. In addition, any use of government communications resources is made with the understanding that such is generally not secure, is not private, and is not anonymous. System and telecommunication managers employ monitoring tools to detect improper use. Coast Guard officials, such as system managers and supervisors may access any electronic communications, which may then be disclosed within an agency or department to personnel who have a need to know in the performance of their duties.
- 7. PROHIBITIONS. Specific prohibitions for personal use of government office equipment are contained in Enclosure (2) of this Instruction.
 - 8. ENFORCEMENT. Enclosure (2) of this Instruction is a lawful general order, punishable under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Violations may result in administrative and disciplinary action against military personnel. It is authority for taking adverse personnel actions against civilian employees. Violations of this Instruction could result in suspension of authorization for personal use of government office equipment and may result in Coast Guard personnel being held financially liable for the cost of improper use.

/s/ T.H. COLLINS
 Vice Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
 Acting Commandant

Encl: (1) Definitions
 (2) Prohibitions for Personal Use of Government Office Equipment

DEFINITIONS

1. The following definitions apply to the personal uses of Coast Guard office equipment.
 - a. Coast Guard personnel means all Coast Guard civilian employees, including non-appropriated fund employees; all active duty and reserve Coast Guard officers and enlisted members; faculty, staff, and cadets at the Coast Guard Academy; members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary when working at Coast Guard units; and all other Federal employees or uniformed service members assigned temporarily or permanently to a Coast Guard command or staff.
 - b. Privilege, in the context of this policy, means the Coast Guard is extending the opportunity to its personnel to use government property for personal use in an effort to create a more supportive work environment.
 - c. Government office equipment includes, but is not limited to: Standard Workstations and related peripheral equipment and software, library resources, telephones, facsimile machines, photocopiers, office supplies, Internet connectivity and access to internet services, and E-mail. This list is provided to show examples of office equipment as envisioned by this policy.
 - d. Minimal additional expense means that personal use of government office equipment is limited to those situations where the government is already providing equipment or services and the use of such equipment or services will not result in any additional expense to the government beyond normal wear and tear or the use of small amounts of electricity, ink, toner or paper.
 - e. Non-business hours mean when the unit is not normally opened for routine business functions. Examples of non-business hours are: 1700 - 0700 Monday through Friday; weekends; holidays; 1600 - 0700 Friday through Monday for reserve drill weekends.
 - f. Personal use means activity that is conducted for purposes other than accomplishing official or otherwise authorized activity, and that is not otherwise prohibited by Enclosure (2) of this Instruction.

PROHIBITIONS FOR PERSONAL USE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICE EQUIPMENT

1. The following personal uses of Coast Guard office equipment are specifically PROHIBITED.
 - a. Modifying any Government equipment, including loading personal software, adding personal hardware/peripherals, or making configuration changes.
 - b. Causing congestion, delay, or disruption of service. Each e-mail user is personally responsible for knowing the size, priority, and number of recipients addressed on any personal e-mail. Personal use of electronic mail with attachments is strongly discouraged. Attachments are easy transports for computer viruses, which can cause great harm to Coast Guard business systems. Attachments also dramatically increase the size of an e-mail and therefore increase the potential for interfering with Coast Guard business by using more disk space and network bandwidth. For example, greeting cards, video, sound or other large file attachments can degrade the performance of the entire network. "Push" technology on the Internet and other continuous data streams would also degrade the performance of the entire network and be an inappropriate use. Coast Guard personnel must adhere to the following limitations on personal e-mail use to avoid causing congestion, delay, or disruption of service:
 - (1) Personal e-mail shall not exceed 400,000 bytes (or characters) in size including all attachments;
 - (2) No individual may send more than 1,000,000 bytes (or characters) of personal e-mail per week;
 - (3) Personal e-mail shall be sent with a priority (or "Importance" in Outlook) of "low;"
 - (4) Personal e-mail shall have no more than 10 recipients.
 - c. Using the Government systems as a staging ground or platform to gain unauthorized access to other systems.
 - d. The creation, copying, transmission, or retransmission of chain letters or other unauthorized mass mailings regardless of the subject matter.
 - e. Using government office equipment for activities that are illegal, inappropriate, or offensive to fellow employees or the public. Such activities include, but are not limited to: hate speech, or material that ridicules others on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation.
 - f. The creation, download, viewing, storage, copying, or transmission of sexually explicit or sexually oriented materials.
 - g. The creation, download, viewing, storage, copying, or transmission of materials related to illegal gambling, illegal weapons, terrorist activities, and any other illegal activities.

- h. Use for commercial purposes or in support of "for-profit" activities or in support of other outside employment or business activity (e.g. consulting for pay, sales or administration of business transactions, sale of goods or services).
- i. Engaging in any outside fund-raising activity, endorsing any product or service, participating in any lobbying activity, or engaging in any prohibited partisan political activity.
- j. Posting agency information to external newsgroups, bulletin boards or other public forums without authority. This includes any use that could create the perception that the communication was made in one's official capacity as a Coast Guard member, unless appropriate approval has been obtained.
- k. Any use that could or does generate more than minimal additional expense to the government.
- l. The unauthorized acquisition, use, reproduction, transmission, or distribution of any controlled information including computer software and data, copyrighted, trade marked or material with other intellectual property rights (beyond fair use), proprietary data, or export controlled software or data.
- m. The introduction of classified information into an unclassified system or environment.
- n. Accessing, storing, processing, or distributing classified, proprietary, sensitive, For Official Use Only (FOUO) or Privacy Act protected information in violation of established security and information release policies.
- o. Knowingly writing, coding, compiling, storing, transmitting, or transferring malicious software code, to include viruses, logic bombs, worms, and macro viruses.
- p. Fundraising activities, either for profit or non-profit, unless the activity is specifically approved by the command (e. g., morale, welfare and recreation car washes).
- q. Making personal long distance telephone calls where the government pays the cost of the long distance call, including making long distance calls with the intent to later reimburse the Government. Long distance calls outside the local calling area shall be billed to the member's home telephone number or personal credit card or placed collect. Brief long distance calls within the local commuting area are authorized.